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## HEIRLOOMS.

AMONG the 'soulless things which adorn life,' and which we prize, not only for their acknowledged value and beauty, but, it may be, from an unanalysed sense of their changelessness and durability, there are none more interesting or more suggestive, than precious stones. Their value is not exclusively in their price; their attraction is not only in their beauty. They are full of associations, half unconscious, indeed, but readily recognised and explained when the chord is struck. They are a portion of the mystery of the earth—more beautiful and wonderful as little by little it is revealed. They have historical significance, and poetical meaning in their relation to the ancient chronicles, and the dim and distant superstitions of the East—the land of gems. They speak a grand and royal language of their own, and have lent their gorgeous beauty to the aid of the most majestic forms of symbolism. In hieroglyphs of gems, the names of the tribes blazed upon the breast of the High-Priest of Israel, and they alone have been found worthy to illustrate the vague splendours of the Apocalyptic Vision.

The pomp of royalty is aided by the lustre of precious stones, and its wealth and magnificence are indicated by their value. There are histories in the mere phrase 'Crown Jewels;' splendid, romantic, guilty, melancholy histories; some of them summoning a crowd of memories, incidents, and personages; others calling up a solitary figure, or perhaps two, to stand forth in the lonely light of their greatness and their sorrow. Who thinks of Charles the Bold without his dazzling sword-hilt, and the diamonds lost at Grandson—to reappear after centuries, and adorn an imperial breast. Are the wit and the profligacy of Marguerite de Valois more characteristic of the image which arises in our fancy, than the famous pear-shaped pearls which she wore when La Mole first beheld her fatal beauty? Anne Boleyn and her coif 'of curious fretwork of pure gold, and cunning device in pearls;' her royal daughter with her pearl-embroidered gown of cloth-of-gold, and quaint

breast-pin, a frog with diamond eyes—subtle compliment to the courtship of Alençon; Mary Stuart's coveted pearls, the gift of her boy-bridegroom, bought by proxy, by Elizabeth, when the captive's poverty consented to their sale; her solemnly silly son, and his string of balass rubies—from incident to incident, and from personage to personage, along the track of the merest surface recollections of history, we may trace the association.

In the romantic episode of the Spanish Match, jewels play a distinguished part; and even the English Solomon never wrote himself down an ass more emphatically than in his letters to Buckingham concerning the second-rate gems which alone he could be induced to give for the propitiation of the Spanish courtiers, and the advance of back-stairs interest. It is a goodly catalogue which sets forth the jewels with which Charles adorned the beautiful bride he ultimately succeeded in winning; and those which the royal daughter of Henri Quatre brought to her adopted country, which she never could in truth adopt. She took but few with her when she returned to France, to await, in terror and suffering, the tidings of her widowhood, and receive, as the last token of her husband's love, the jewelled George, removed from his neck to make way for the axe of the headsmen. Were any of the diamonds of that relic among those which the daughter of the Bourbon and the Medici sold, that the daughter of the Stuart might be fed and warmed in the palace of her forefathers, that her life might be preserved, to be terminated by poison under the complacent superintendence of Philippe d'Orleans? And the gay and gallant, the brave and splendid Buckingham!—his very name is like a flash of light on a scene of courtly splendour. The plumes wave, the silken and velvet robes rustle, the perfumed love-locks fall upon the point-lace collars, as the throng of gorgeous ghosts flit by. Where is the pure diamond, rippling with a stream of light as the great duke doffed the plumed hat for the last time to his duchess, when she left the banqueting-hall, which was wont to fasten the graceful feather? Where is the collar of rubies? What has become of the 'little diamonds' and the

larger pearls which George Villiers scattered like dust in the palace halls whose fair neglected queen was his royal love? Where are the black pearls which Catharine of Braganza wore at Whitehall, 'in compliment to her complexion,' as was said by the worst and wittiest of her rivals, long outlived by the contented and comfortable queen, who, after the fashion of Anne of Cleves, her remote predecessor in the perilous honour of consortship with a conscienceless monarch, contrived to make the best of a decidedly unpleasant position? Who has the Este jewels, the delicate, intricate, quaint Florentine armlets, the cordelières, the gemmed rings, the old historic stones of price, which Mary of Modena brought from her ancient house to the inhospitable land which always looked upon her coldly, and finally insulted her, so that she fled from it, even before the storm broke? On what fair neck and bosom, on what round white arms, are the gems flashing now, steady, deathless in their radiance, which once, it may be, lent their lustre to the beauty of the enigmatical daughter of the Borgias, the dangerous bride of Alfonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara? Mary of Modena may have worn them; fancy is free to weave her fabric of association where facts lend so much material.

The gems that princes have worn, the gems that they have given in recognition of state services, or in guerdon of the offices of kindness, of private friendship, are rich in association; but there are some unworn, unconferréd, which have histories too. Is there no story in that assortment of 'fine stones' given out from the king's jewel wardrobe, to be set in the velvet cap, which, crossed with the heraldic closing bars of his rank, was to be worn by the Lord Edward, at the grand ceremonial, for which Henry VIII. drew up the programme with his own right hand, soon to do no more wickedness, and to moulder in the dust with its victims? The Lord Edward was never created Prince of Wales, and the 'fine stones' were replaced in the jewel wardrobe, while the artificers wrought at the construction of a small imperial crown for the boyish head, which carried its weight so well, but laid it down so early. What story can surpass in ghastly effect, in pathos, with the grotesque insanity of the royal Spaniard tinging it throughout, that of the coronation of the dead woman, raised from the tomb of years, to share the splendour that could never lighten the gloom of her lover's broken heart? Had not the diamonds and the emeralds that glittered in the crown which encircled the fleshless skull and incrustéd the sceptre of Castile, round which closed the skeleton fingers, an awful meaning in their pitiless brightness?

Where are the diamonds now which formed the 'Queen's Necklace'—the diamonds which never were worn by the woman whose ruin they wrought in part—the most famous of all the jewels that sparkle in the pages of history—the diamonds which should have had a drop of crimson blood in the heart of each? Whither have they been dispersed, which, when gem was linked to gem, were daintily touched by Marie Antoinette's fingers, and coveted, just a little, spite of her renunciation, by her from whom all the glories of state were soon to fall away? They were destined to be held in the proud Austrian's remembrance, to rankle there, with the torture of wounded pride, of outraged delicacy. They, the gorgeous jewels, the like of which are symbols to princes of the love and loyalty of peoples, had an inverted meaning to the queen of France.

To her they signified a nation's prejudice and dislike, growing into hatred (*Ille me tuorant, Christine*, she wrote to her sister), and the first touch of that sense of powerlessness, so bitter to those born in the purple. Low intrigue, from which her station could not secure her; insolent presumption, from which her dignity could not shield her; maligners whom she could not silence, enemies whom she could not punish, the triumph of a lie—these were the associations which the famous diamond necklace had for the Widow Capet, when she looked back from her prison, with the scaffold in the distance, to the palace and the throne. Had the fabled basilisk been robbed of its eyes for that necklace, or had some evil sprite cursed the gems in his discontented keeping, as they lay, yet harmless, in the depths of the mine?

Again, a famous diamond necklace appears, in high and historic places. What will the future have to tell, what associations to evoke in connection with the magnificent gift which the Czar is preparing for his wife? The story of this necklace is to commence now, with the collection of the gems. It is to have no antecedents; the diamonds, to be worthy of the imperial wearer, are to be all new, cut, polished, set for the purpose for which they are designed. The present time is assisting at the birth of one of the most magnificent heirlooms the world has ever seen. For the future is its history. Will it be as various, as eventful, as mysterious as that of the Mountain of Light? laden with the immemorial traditions of oriental greatness, the boast of a conquering dynasty, the pride of a superb sovereignty, the spoil of war, the trophy of successful traders, the gift of British subjects to their queen.

Jewels, which are a portion of the spoil of war, are associated with its rewards. They gleam upon the breast of the great general, and stud the marshal's *bdton*. They are symbolical of many kinds of fame, and have a greater personality than any other symbol. The unforgotten great have worn them, and they remain. The rôles of state moulder into dust, he neglected in receptacles of rubbish, or ultimately find their way to most undignified and uncongenial endings, in old-clothes shops, or theatrical wardrobes. But the jewelled insignia of rank among statesmen, nobles, and warriors, remain always, bright, beautiful, and precious, as should be the memory of the dead.

If we turn away from the narrower, the more individual sentiment which endows jewels with rich charms of association, to the wider and more abstract theme, of their connection in the human mind with its aspirations towards the supernatural, the divine, we shall find that connection existing from the beginning. The Egyptian god looked 'o'er the desolate sand-desert' out of diamond eyes, and the idols of the Assyrian worship blazed with precious stones. The subtle and luxurious Egyptian, the learned and sensuous Greek, the elect and god-governed Jew, the warlike and practical Roman, the barbarous Goth and 'dwarfish Hun,' the chivalrous Frank and the devastating Tartar, are all alike in this—that they paid homage to their gods and to their kings in tribute of precious stones; the spoils of the treasure-house of the earth, the product of their most difficult toil, and the result of their most skilled labour. We have but to glance from the temples of Thebes to the Ephesian shrines, and the gorgeous Pantheon at Rome; from the Tabernacle in the wilderness

to the camp-altar of St Louis in the Syrian sands ; from the clasp of Charlemagne's royal mantle to the leopard-skin tent of Theodoric, and the barbaric splendour of Attila's hair ; from the Temple and the throne of Solomon to the diamond-shod hoofs of Mohammed's charger, and the sacred tresses of his mane, twined with pearls of Ormuz and rubies of Samarcand. Historical facts, and the fables which are their fanciful reflection, multiply as we think of them, and swell the tide of association with tributary riches ; true as the mitre of the High-Priest ; fabulous as the jewelled throne of Timour or the seal of Solomon, as the gem-lighted caverns of the King of the Sea, or the treasures of the valley whence the roc bore Sindbad away, with his turbanful of diamonds.

Heirlooms of the future are hidden in the earth, in the burning torrid zone, and in the barren ranges of mountains in the West ; toiling feet tread over their buried riches, weary eyes are turned to the dim distance in whose recesses they lie. From the most desolate regions they are brought, to lend the finishing-touch of grace and splendour to the fabric of civilised society ; wrested from the earth by the poorest and the most abased, they are the prize of the wealthiest, and the adornment of the proudest and most refined. They are among the secrets of the sea ; they lie in the bosom of the deep, and do not suffer change or destruction. The terrible spoils of the ocean, the ghastly trophies of its victory over man's skill and courage, which make of the depths a sepulchre, are mingled with jewels, which would not have lost their beauty and value if they were brought to the light of day after a thousand years.

Art has borrowed their aid in its grandest productions, and science has applied itself to their investigation, seeking the secret of their lustre and their properties, and assigning them their places in the great catalogue of creation. But there is one which yet defies science, which sets it at naught when it would define the cause of the hardness, and the origin of the lustre which give it sovereignty over the kingdom of precious stones. Supreme in beauty and in value, rarest and most difficult of access, richest in meaning, and royal in rank, the Diamond holds the mystery of its being in its translucent heart.

The prominence of the place held by jewels in the history of the kingdoms of the earth, of their kings, and their great men, is also to be traced, on a reduced scale, among families and individuals. They have associations which no other articles of value, however great their price or remarkable their beauty, can possess. They have an individuality which connects them with the history of human beings, and invests them with an almost sacred character. They are frequently gifts, symbolical or commemorative of all that is best and truest, most hopeful, joyful, or sorrowful in our poor brief lives. Pledges of betrothal, marriage-gifts, commemorations of anniversaries sacred in the chronology of domestic life, memorials of successful endeavour, changeless remembrancers of all that changes and passes away, sacred mementoes of the dead, and symbols of mourning—such are jewels, alone among the lifeless things which surround us, but have no power of sympathetic meaning. The proudest of all heirlooms, they are bright links between the wearers in the present and the dead whom they once adorned, and they have meanings as such which no other hereditary

possessions can boast. The park, the mansion, the picture-gallery, the sculpture-hall, the silver and gold decked banqueting-room, are vague and impersonal in their significance, though they count their existence by centuries of heirship. They are but halls of lost footsteps. Dead-and-gone men and women have walked, and lived, and feasted in them ; eyes sealed long ago in the dust have gazed upon the art-treasures, and shone the brighter with the deceptive sense of possession ; but they have been apart, they have been abstract, they have not been of them. But what of the heirlooms in the strong-boxes and the strong-rooms ? What of the gems which actually touched the soft warm flesh of the women whose portraits hang upon the walls of the picture-gallery—which bound their perfumed hair, and decked their slender fingers ? the very same jewels which the lord of all this wealth has given to his bride, whose son shall in his turn tell a fair young wife how well they became the matronly grace and dignity of his mother. The history of the race is best read with the commentary of these precious heirlooms, which but acquire dignity with old fashion, and never are touched with the grotesqueness which attaches to bygone costume. They are the memorials of the best and dearest sentiments of family life. The herald's art proclaims the pride and dignity of descent, the portrait-gallery keeps up the tradition of beauty, the armoury has its records of the warlike deeds of a famous ancestry, the rent-roll records wealth, and titles tell of honour. But the jewel caskets reveal more than splendour undimmed by time ; they tell how the dead loved and wooed the women whose beauty their precious contents adorned ; they shew here a date, there an initial, now a motto, then a 'posy,' anon an emblematic combination of gems ; everywhere a hint of the past, and with their solemn memorial of death, a beautiful commemoration of love.

If we look from splendid homes to humbler dwellings, it is still the same ; perhaps, indeed, though not so extensive, association is stronger with possessions of the simpler and less costly kind. Such are almost invariably gifts, and of great significance for the giver and receiver. Where there is no question of *parure*, where the demands of 'society' are unheard or unheeded, jewels acquire intensified meaning, and the simplest trinket is a household poem.

#### THE WHITE HART INN.

I HAD 'walked' the hospitals, deriving every possible advantage from that pedestrian effort ; I had passed successfully through the ordeals of hall and college ; I had completed my apprenticeship ; I had become fully competent and entitled to cure or kill, as the case might be, according to act of parliament ; I was no longer a student, a bud upon the tree of medical science ; I was at last a full-blown practitioner, if it be correct to apply that term to one altogether without a practice.

My old colleagues at the Middlesex treated me handsomely. They invited me to a farewell supper. Although they remained in a grub state, as it were, whereas I had become a butterfly, and was about to take wing away from them, they were immensely cordial ; and I was, I trust, not proud. They made speeches, toasting me, wishing me

prosperity and long life, and musically averred that I was a jolly good-fellow, and that nobody could deny it. I returned thanks, impressively. Tears were shed, hands were shaken, glasses were broken. Then came parting—forgetfulness. I found myself the next morning with a bad headache, my own master, and master of very little besides—my student-days behind me—the world before me—the stock in trade with which I was to commence business on my own account being represented by my right to add the magic letters M.R.C.S. after my name. That was something, of course. Yet I know when I tried to convert M.R.C.S. into L. S. D., by no process of arithmetic could I make much of the sum.

Certainly I was depressed. We will say it was the reaction after the exceeding excitement of my state of mind during many weeks, preparing for and passing my examinations. I would rather not impeach the Middlesex punch, by thinking that had anything to do with it, especially as they are rather proud of the way in which they mix and dispense punch at the Middlesex. But, as I have said, I awoke with a headache. I went to sleep again, and dreamed of a brass plate with my name on it in large black capitals, followed by the letters M.R.C.S. I again awoke, denouncing my dream as a mockery. Such a brass plate could not for long years be mine. I possessed no fortune; I could not buy a practice ready made, while I was without the means of providing myself with subsistence if I should attempt to settle down anywhere and *make* a practice. I had only to hope for a valuable medical appointment; but that was absurd—I had no chance of obtaining such a thing. Failing that, I must look for a situation as qualified assistant to an established medical man: not an attractive prospect, and, of course, holding out no chance of a brass plate with my own name on it. And the more I thought over it, the more it seemed to me that a brass plate all to one's self was as near as one could get to perfect bliss. All that glistens is not gold, however; and I have since learned a shining brass plate does not invariably signify absolute happiness or prosperity.

I pondered over my situation with no appetite for my breakfast. Just then, the post brought me a letter. It informed me of the demise of an elderly maiden aunt; and by way of balm to the natural grief that occurrence occasioned me, I was instructed that, under the terms of her will, I was her legatee to the extent of five hundred pounds, free of duty. As a precautionary measure, lest the news should be too much for me, and entirely without reference to the Middlesex punch of the previous evening, I became my own first patient, and I prescribed for myself a strong dose of brandy and soda-water (the brandy part of the mixture, it may be interesting to the faculty to be informed, being especially strong). After the exhibition of this potion, in conjunction with the thought of my legacy, I felt considerably relieved; I was even able to consume a sardine, a slice of dry toast, and three cups of tea. I was curiously thirsty, the fact being

evidently attributable to anxiety of mind acting upon a febrile predisposition of constitution.

At certain periods of life, one is prone to somewhat exaggerated views; inclined, for instance, to account five hundred pounds a perfect fortune. I own I thought my legacy an endless sum—a sort of blank cheque signed by Croesus. The five hundredth sovereign seemed to be years and years, miles and miles, away from me. Towards the close of a long life, I might perhaps be within hail of it, but not before; and, meanwhile, I had the four hundred and ninety-nine other sovereigns to exist upon and enjoy myself with.

Now, what I was to do with my five hundred pounds? I put it to my friends. Here is this sum—now, what would you recommend me to do with it? Some said: Invest it. Well, of course, any fool could say that. But it is of no use investing when you want to expend, and it was only natural that I should desire to commence disbursements as soon as possible. It is no good having a legacy if you're to lock it up again in the funds as soon as you've got it. You might almost as well have never had it at all. Others said: Buy a practice with it. I made use of a strong expression as to that. It seemed to me a singularly brutal proposition. It was clear that *they* had never come in for legacies. The idea of parting all at once with five hundred pounds, every pound of it—all my pretty chickens at one fell swoop, in exchange for what? A practice! A swindle very likely, advertised in the newspapers, and supported by sham books and imaginary patients, a vacant surgery, empty bottles, a mahogany counter, and numberless brass knobs to imitation drawers. No; whatever I did with my money, I was not going to play ducks and drakes with it by buying a practice.

I spent about a hundred pounds of my legacy in thinking what I should do with it, and in looking about me generally. I had no notion before that looking about one and thinking were such expensive operations. Finally, I decided that I would settle down somewhere, and try and make a practice. But where should I settle down? I again applied to my friends.

One suggested this place, another suggested that. What did I think of Bermondsey? Whitechapel? Hoxton? notorious openings for an enterprising young medical man. Prolific in patients, certainly; but how about fees? I naturally inquired. Then I was recommended to try Mayfair, Tyburnia, or Belgravia; to take a large house, and drive furiously about the streets in a yellow chariot drawn by a pair of splendid bays. I was to become a fashionable doctor, and make a fortune in no time. Well, of course that sounded very well; but the more I examined into it, the less feasible it seemed. To begin 'with a splash,' as people called it, was one thing, but how to keep up the splash, and go on with it without going down altogether, was another. Other counsel was in favour of an agricultural district, a manufacturing town, a popular watering-place. One frank friend told me simply to go to Bath. But I found, upon inquiry, that Bath was amply supplied with medical practitioners. It was then proposed to me to try Jericho; but its distance from all my friends and connections really put Jericho out of the question.

How it happened that after all this deliberation, I decided upon journeying down to Noddington, a

small town in a midland county, with the view of establishing myself there, I now hardly know. But excessive discretion is apt sometimes to drive a man to desperation. I had been so long hesitating as to what I should do, that it became indispensably necessary that I should do something, anything, at last. Otherwise, if I had not already determined that I would certainly settle down in Noddington, and make a practice there at all costs, and come what might come of it; if I had not wholly rid myself of every doubt or second thought upon the subject, perhaps my first acquaintance with the place would have somewhat damped the fire of my resolution; for Noddington was not busy, or vivacious, or promising-looking, considered from a medical practitioner's point of view. There seemed little danger of the inhabitants endangering their constitutions by excess of bodily labour or mental anxiety. If noise, or worry, or incessant activity have a prejudicial effect upon human nature, why, then, the Noddingtonians were in no danger of their chances of longevity being interfered with in those respects. If, on the other hand, inertness, torpidity, and want of occupation were matters requiring medical attention, why, then, thought I, my chances of making a practice and earning a living were decidedly improved. Noddington was fast asleep, pillowed amongst its hills. I was there to wake it up, feel its pulse, prescribe for it, and in due course furnish it with a little account of my charges for those services.

Noddington was in truth little more than a large village, though it chose to call itself a town, and was so described in gazetteers, and road-books, and county histories, probably because at noon every Saturday two or three old women had a fancy for assembling in the High Street with fruit-stalls before them, and dignifying that simple proceeding by calling it a market. Traditions survived to the effect, that in remote coaching-times Noddington had been a place of importance, as being on the direct road to a large manufacturing town. But a railway had diverted the channel of traffic, and left Noddington high and dry, as it were. Its posting-houses and post-horses were things of the past. It had dwindled into the position of a village in an agricultural district. Its connection with the manufacturing interest had wholly ceased. It had in a way retired from business, compulsorily, and with no very satisfactory amount of savings to retire upon. Still, I meditated, people must come into the world there, and must go out of the world there. On such occasions, the presence of a medical man is indispensable. Even Noddington cannot be so far removed from civilisation, so regardless of decency, as to do altogether without a doctor. Wherever there is ever so small a congregation of poor human nature, the medical practitioner may pick up crumbs of profit from the midst. Just as I had arrived at that satisfactory reflection, a puff of wind came towards me. 'Delicious!' I cried. 'There is an open drain somewhere about Noddington. Well, well; things are not so very unpromising after all!'

Noddington was composed of two straggling streets only, High Street and Cross Street, intersecting each other at right angles, with a small rude old market-cross at the crossing point. Close by was the Red Lion Commercial Inn. I entered the Red Lion Commercial Inn.

I rapped on the bar with my walking-stick, I

shouted, I kicked against a door, I stamped on the floor. The Lion was evidently asleep, and required a good deal of waking. The idea of a chance customer had never entered into the Lion's head. I called 'Hi!' then 'Shop!' then, lest that might have given offence, I cried out in a dignified bass voice, as they do at the theatre: 'What ho! within there!' I was just likening myself to Iago calling up Brabantio in the first scene of *Othello*, and thinking I was getting on well with the part, and altogether displaying a genius for the stage I had not previously been aware that I possessed, when a stout, florid man appeared, with rather an affronted expression of face. He was evidently not well pleased that I had taken the Lion at his word, and believed his statement literally as to his providing good entertainment for man and beast. However, he was ultimately induced to provide me with refreshment in the shape of some strong cheese—strangely rasping to the palate—some stale bread, and some ale, which would have been a pleasanter beverage if it had possessed more head, and rather less hardness.

A stout, florid, heavy man, with a dull eye, a low forehead, and a triplet of chins instead of a neck. Yes, I thought, I'll soon have you on my books, my fine fellow. I know your symptoms: determination of old ale to the head; singular tightness in the region of the waist after eating; drowsiness, not unaccompanied by dizziness, after your fifth rummer of hot brandy and water in the evening; stertorous breathing, and general stupidity. I know all about you. And, mentally, I made up for him a nice little prescription—to be taken the last thing before going to bed—which would have done him a world of good.

It's no use beating about the bush with a dull man, under the notion of preparing him to receive an important revelation; tell him plump what you've got to say, and give him time to let it sink and soak thoroughly into his mind. Insinuation and preparation in his case are just so much waste of time. Of course, if your news is of a very astounding nature, and results in his having an apoplectic fit, it's unfortunate; but, after all, it's far more his affair than yours. The best thing to be done then is to send for the nearest medical man. In the present case, in the event of the Red Lion's having a fit, I was the nearest medical man. So I told him plainly 'that I had come down to Noddington to set up as a general practitioner,' and waited to see what effect upon him the information would have, meanwhile just putting my hand in my pocket to make sure that I had got my case of instruments handy about me.

He turned upon me a dreary glare from his beery eyes; he silently rocked himself to and fro for some few minutes; he at length produced, from cavernous ventral depths—as though it were a choice bottle of wine from a secret place in his cellar—the expression: 'Lor' bless 'ee!' and then spat on the floor. The benediction he intended to convey would have seemed to me more valuable if it had been less decidedly tinged with contempt.

'Is there a doctor in Noddington?' I asked.

'Surely. Dr Blossop.'

'Are there any houses to let in Noddington?'

'Ne'er a one,' he answered.

I was somewhat disappointed. If I could not find a house to live in, there seemed an end to my plan of settling in Noddington as a general

practitioner. The Red Lion, perhaps exhausted by unwonted conversational efforts, turned away. A shabby little old man then entered. His eye was watery, and there was a purplish-blue hue about his nose. A likely patient by and by, I thought to myself; and I began to draw up in my own mind a neat little diagnosis of the possible complaint about which he would at some future day come to me for advice and treatment. I set him down as the sexton and parish clerk of Noddington; and such he subsequently proved to be. He and the Red Lion said 'Mornin'' to each other, and then a mug of ale was set before him, although he had given no order concerning the refreshment he required. He was a regular customer, evidently. I soon found him not unwilling to talk. The sight of a face new to Noddington had upon him almost an exciting influence. He became quite communicative. He informed me that his name was Huxham, and that, man and boy, he had lived in Noddington some fifty years; albeit, he came originally from a distant county.

'Any houses building in Noddington?' I inquired.

He told me that there had not been a house built in Noddington within his recollection. Clearly, it was not a rising, or an improving, or an increasing place. Yet he repeated the Red Lion's information as to there being no houses to let in Noddington.

'Leastways,' he said, 'there's not a house as any one would take.'

This statement provoked further inquiry; and at last I arrived at the fact, that there was an empty house in Noddington; but it was not a desirable place of abode; it possessed an evil reputation; it was, in fact, stated to be haunted. 'Come, come,' I said to myself; 'things are beginning to look promising. A haunted house will be just the thing for a young medical practitioner. A famous advertisement; for, of course, I shall effect a cure; I shall get rid of the ghost, and in such way thoroughly establish and distinguish myself in the eyes of Noddington.'

I was not nervous about ghosts. We had often talked over the subject at the Middlesex, and had finally settled 'that ghosts proceeded from the stomach,' and demanded a course of gentle tonics, and strict attention to diet and general health.

Mr Huxham became interested in my plans. I seemed to have given a new object to his life. He talked himself thirsty, and was then regaled with an additional mug of ale at my expense. I gathered from him that, in the palmy days of Noddington, the White Hart Inn had been the chief posting-house in the place, and altogether a very lively and thriving concern. It was a large, long, irregular building, of most old-fashioned look, with high, red-tiled roof, and casement windows, erected upon the vaguest architectural plan, partly of brick whitewashed over, partly lath and plaster, and partly of timber. A tall sign-post stood before the door; but the sign itself had long since vanished, and the post presented an unpleasantly bare, gaunt, and gibbet-like aspect. Close by were long, wooden horse-troughs, all but dismantled, and wholly rotten and useless, covered with rust and moss, and filled with refuse and rubbish. At the back, were large, dilapidated, tumble-down stables and out-buildings. Doubtless, years ago, when to live only thinly partitioned from apoplexy and brain-fever was quite the right thing to do, the White Hart Inn, with its fiery punch, heady port, stifling

four-posters, suffocating feather-beds, want of ventilation, general stiffness, and preposterous charges, was regarded as quite a temple of human comfort and pleasure; ease in an inn being then synonymous with frouzy misery, unwholesome food, maddening potations, your pulse at fever-heat, and *delirium tremens* handing you your candle as you staggered up to your bedroom. But times had changed; evil days had come for the White Hart. The proprietor had struggled manfully, but vainly. One by one, the coaches began to disappear from Noddington, and the customers dropped off from the White Hart. He made sacrifices. As a traveller, pursued by wolves, flings to them now this, now that, thankful at last if he be permitted to escape from them with bare life, so the landlord of the White Hart, dogged by the wolf Poverty, made sundry surrenders. He decreased his establishment; he shut up the stables; dismissed the crowd of hangers-on who had of old given life and bustle to the scene; he even let off part of the old inn, converting the two wings into private houses, retaining only the centre portion of the building, and trusting that, with these efforts at adapting himself to the times, he might be permitted to carry on his business with decent success to the end of the chapter—a veteran, maimed and mutilated in his fight with fortune, yet still presenting a front to the foe. But the fates were against the White Hart; and on the evening of the day on which the last coach passed through Noddington for the last time, the landlord of the White Hart hanged himself.

It was a desperate and elaborate suicide, with much forethought about it. The poor soul had tightly fastened his hands and feet, to give himself no chance of change in his design, if repentance should come to him after he had kicked away the chair from under him. He was found, hours after, stone cold, suspended from the hook in the ceiling of the great upper room of the White Hart. A grand chandelier once hung from that hook in the old palmy days when Noddington thrived, and hunt balls were given at the White Hart. In that large room in which the poor suicide was found suspended, there had been much festivity of old, dancing of Sir Roger and the Tanti minnets and gavottes, gentlemen in bag-wigs and silk stockings leading out ladies in Paduasoy and powder, genteel assemblies and election dinners. All was over now. The doors were closed; the house—that is, the centre portion of it—was falling into ruins, and it had the reputation of being haunted. The perturbed spirit of the suicide landlord visited ever and anon the rooms, and staircases, and passages of the White Hart, acting inconsequentially and unreasonably, after the manner of perturbed spirits—giving runaway rings at the bells, groaning fitfully and fearfully, and clanking a chain. Some described the noise rather as of the clashing together of pewter flagons, and walking up and down on the creaking floors with feet invisible, though the footfalls sounded so loudly. More than this: certain Noddingtonians had been heard to say, in awful tones, with blanched faces, that occasionally was to be seen, when the moonlight streamed into the windows of the great room, hanging from the hook in the ceiling, a vague shadowy something, that positively wasn't a chandelier, or anything like a chandelier, but an object much more harrowing, and altogether very different indeed.

The old White Hart Inn was, it seemed, at my

service. But, then, it was no use talking about it, said Mr Huxham. It wouldn't suit me. I couldn't live in it. Gentlemen before me had tried it on—lots of them—all sorts of gentlemen—but the thing couldn't be done. Another doctor in the place might answer well enough; there was room enough for two, very likely. Mr Huxham wouldn't take it upon himself to say there was not. People did fall ill now and then at Noddington—more people than might be expected, perhaps. They suffered from what he might call all-overishness. Mr Huxham owned to having felt it himself more than once. But as for taking the White Hart, or trying to take it, living in it, and attempting to set up there as a doctor—the results of such proceedings were so obviously preposterous, that Mr Huxham did not think it necessary to state them, or to complete his sentence; he preferred to hide his face in his mug, and finish his ale.

I was not going to abandon my cherished project, however. I had come down to Noddington to make a practice; I would make it at the White Hart Inn, in spite of its perturbed spirit, and the chandelier-hook in its great room, if I could find no more suitable place. The example of my pertinacity affected Mr Huxham. He began at length, somewhat tipsily, to applaud my resolution, and to encourage my design. He put me in communication with Mr Mumford, a solicitor in Noddington who had the letting of the White Hart. I found Mr Mumford disposed to afford me facilities in the way of carrying out my plan. He lived in one of the wings of the inn. The other was inhabited by a Mr Hardman, a retired maltster.

Mr Mumford was very frank. He owned that the house had a bad name, and had had it for years. People told many stories about it, but he thought they exaggerated a good deal. Mr Hardman, who lived next door, had never made a complaint as to hearing noises, or anything of that kind. But then the walls were very thick; and, it afterwards appeared, Mr Hardman was stone deaf. And as to Mr Mumford himself now, had he heard anything? Did he suffer any annoyance from the perturbed spirit of the White Hart? Well, Mr Mumford objected to the word annoyance, he couldn't honestly say that he had been annoyed. But he didn't mind admitting that occasionally, at long intervals, he had heard sounds proceeding from the centre portion of the old inn, for which he found it difficult to account. Still, what of that? There were always noises in old houses: walls cracked, and floors creaked, and boards started, and furniture jarred and grated. The noises troubled him in no way; he lived on all the same—went to bed and to sleep, and thought no more of them. He was free to confess, however, that various tenants had from time to time attempted to occupy the house, but had gone away expressing dissatisfaction, abandoning all notion of living there permanently. It was no use his stating what they had heard or seen, or rather what they had said they had heard or seen, because, as I was doubtless aware, it wouldn't be evidence. For his part, he could assure me that he had seen nothing; and for what he had heard, it might be merely fancy; fancy was curiously active in the matter of haunted houses and perturbed spirits. But the plain state of the case was this: there was the house; he was instructed to let it at an almost nominal rent, by the week, or the month, or the year, or the term of years. Frankly, the proprietor

would let it on any terms. How would I take it? That seemed to Mr Mumford the long and the short of the matter.

I did take it for a month on trial.

As I was leaving Mr Mumford's, I encountered a stout, elderly, rosy-faced gentleman, with very white hair, and very black eyes and eyebrows. He wore a wide-awake hat, but otherwise he was rather strictly attired, with a stiff white cravat, and a black frock-coat buttoned up tightly, and exhibiting the portly contour of his figure to much advantage. I was just thinking that he might possibly be the rector of Noddington, when he was introduced to me as Dr Blossop. (He styled himself, and was generally styled throughout Noddington, *Doctor Blossop*, but I afterwards found he practised as surgeon and apothecary, notwithstanding his dignified prefix.)

He was cordial in his manner, with a cheerful, chirpy sort of voice. He seemed instantly to dismiss from his mind every sort of objection he might have reasonably entertained in regard to my being a rival practitioner, an interloper trying to undermine his practice in Noddington. He shook me by the hand heartily, assured me that he was pleased to make my acquaintance, averred that there was room for both of us in Noddington—plenty of room, and plenty to do; that he was getting old, and should be glad now and then of aid and counsel from a younger man; that it was quite a comfort to an old-fashioned doctor in that quiet place to have a talk with a professional brother who came fresh from the books and the schools. 'Not that there is much science wanted here,' he whispered; 'all that kind of thing goes to the infirmary. A simple pill and draught business, with obstetrics, of course; that's about all we do here.'

I found the interior of the White Hart in a desperate state of dilapidation. But with the aid of a carpenter, a white-washer, and a charwoman, I managed to make decently habitable two rooms on the ground-floor. I converted what had once been, I think, the tap, into a comfortable bedroom, and arranged the bar-parlour to look something like a surgery and a consulting-room. I was deterred from attempting further changes by the expense, and by the prophecies I heard on all sides of me that the whole thing would be an utter failure, and that I should be out of the house altogether in less than a week. Why should I hope to succeed, where so many had failed? my neighbours asked. An auctioneer had been the last tenant, but one night in the house had been found sufficient for him. Before him, there had been a lawyer, a medical gentleman, a retired linen-draper, not to name many more, all of whom had given up the thing after a very brief experience. What right had I to think I should have better fortune? Why, I looked a mere boy, the Noddingtonians declared. But one never knew the amount of impudence of those young London chaps, they were good enough to add. Meanwhile, they ought to have been grateful. I had furnished them with a new topic of conversation, and topics of conversation were very scarce in Noddington. A small crowd stood round the door of the White Hart, watching the operations of my assistants and myself. I looked round on the chance of the excitement resulting in deliriousness or epilepsy. When the final touch was given to my handiwork, and a brass-plate was screwed on to the door,

announcing my name and profession, with the letters M.R.C.S., I really thought that would be a little too much for one or two of the Noddingtonians; however, they survived it.

For a night or two, I slept at the Red Lion, until my preparations were completed. Mr Huxham offered to sit up with me the first night of my occupancy of the White Hart, if I felt at all nervous. I scouted the notion of feeling nervous. He then said that his object was curiosity. I believe it to have been brandy and water. Finally, I accepted his companionship. Undoubtedly, the White Hart was a gloomy, depressing place, and so much had been said to set me against it, that the company of Huxham even seemed preferable to absolute solitude. I determined that I would not retire to bed until some little time after twelve; so that, if a ghost were to come, he might have his walk out, and get it over, and leave me the rest of the night in peace. I obtained a bottle of brandy from the Red Lion; with the object, as I explained, not so much of keeping up my courage, as of preventing any danger from cold or damp; it was so long since the White Hart had been inhabited.

I had been all over the house by daylight, searching carefully for traces of a ghost, or for the presence of anything that, distorted by popular superstition, might have given encouragement to the prevalent belief. I could find nothing. I wandered from room to room of the dreary old place, peering up chimneys, examining cupboards and recesses, looking out of windows. At the back was to be seen the deserted stable-yard, overgrown with rank grass; in one corner stood a rotten water-butt, to catch the rain from the roofs of the stable buildings; in another, close to the house, a tall wooden pump, handle-less, and apparently falling to pieces, with a thick cloak of ivy about it. Indeed, at the back of the White Hart, the ivy flourished prodigiously, hiding many deficiencies and dilapidations and uglinesses, climbing up the walls, and waving green flags, as it were, from the very chimney-tops, to signify its complete possession of the place. On either side of the stable-yard were the walled-off, trimly-kept gardens of Mr Mumford and Mr Hardman. Mumford's garden had once been the bowling-green of the inn; Hardman's had been formerly the skittle-ground. Beyond were the backs of the houses in Cross Street, each with a garden. In one of these I noticed a pretty-looking, brown-haired, brown-eyed young lady, in a lavender silk dress, tending her plants. I learned that this was Miss Julia Blossop, the only daughter—the only child indeed—of Dr Blossop, who resided in Cross Street.

I again went over the house, at night, with a candle, before sitting down to brandy and water with Mr Huxham. Everything seemed to be precisely as I had left it in the morning. All was very quiet. A few Noddingtonians lingered inquisitive about the front-door; but a little after ten o'clock, they one by one took their departure. Their habit of going to rest early and punctually was stronger than their desire to ascertain what evil destiny might befall me. They went to bed, I believe, fully persuaded that I was in for a very troubled sort of night. Probably they also voted Huxham very foolhardy for his pains, if they did not decide that repeated mugs of ale had washed out of him such discretion as he had ever possessed.

Mr Huxham tried to make himself pleasant; he only succeeded in making himself intoxicated. As we sat up, sipping brandy and water, waiting for the ghost, he told some ghastly stories of body-snatching which had occurred within his experience as a sexton. He might, I think, have selected a more exhilarating and enlivening topic.

It was past eleven o'clock. Huxham was becoming very incoherent. I was tired, and yet wakeful. I think I would have given five pounds at that moment to have been well out of the business; to have been in bed and asleep in my London lodgings, secure from interruption by any possible perturbed spirit. Just then, we both started up with almost a scream; a bell in the corner of the room, in which we were sitting, began to ring violently. Huxham turned as white as a sheet, and I fancy there was not much colour in my own face at the moment.

I took up a candle. 'We must see from what part of the house this bell is rung,' I said. But Huxham sat quite still. I followed the direction of the bell-wire; it went out of the room, along the passage, through the wall at the back. Evidently, it was rung by some one outside in the stable-yard; or could it be that a bough of ivy had become twisted in the wire without, and then swaying in the wind, had so rung the bell? It was not probable, still it was possible. I own I felt a strong disinclination to unbar the back-door and look out into the stable-yard, especially as Huxham, though quite sobered by his fright, seemed so little disposed to aid me or back me up in any way. He remained rooted to his seat. However, I determined to be rid of the annoyance of the bell at any rate. I should never need a bell ringing from the back of the house. I mounted on a chair, twisted the wire—it was very rusty—and snapped it. At all events, I had cut the perturbed spirit off from that method of vexing me.

All was again quiet. I mixed another glass of brandy and water. I began to breathe more freely. Huxham seemed more himself.

'Well, we've stood it, both of us, very well as yet,' he said. 'It's lucky we're both of us good-plucked ones.'

We were at peace for a quarter of an hour or so. Huxham was beginning to talk about body-snatching again. Suddenly we both looked up to the ceiling. There was certainly the noise as of some one walking up and down, up and down, in the great room on the first floor, over our heads—a heavy, solemn footfall.

'It's old Jugby's tread!' gasped Huxham with an oath (Jugby was the name of the suicide landlord of the White Hart). 'You're never going up stairs?'

'I am,' I said, somewhat tremulously. I took a candle, and went up stairs. I turned the handle of the door of the great room. The footsteps had ceased. The door was fastened; or rather, it seemed to me, was held by some one, or something, from within. I pushed against it, but it did not yield. Just then, there came the sharp noise as of the front-door of the house slammed to violently. I ran down stairs: I found that Huxham had vanished; he had had enough of it. I could hear him running down the silent High Street as fast as he could go.

I waited for a moment. My heart was beating with a painful turbulence. I was tempted to imitate Huxham, and make my escape. Then I

thought of our Middlesex views about ghosts; that they proceeded from the stomach, were due to disordered digestion, ganglionic disturbances, inactivity of the liver. I resolved to be true to the Middlesex theories, whatever might happen. Besides, had I not decided to make a practice in Noddington? I went up stairs again, the candle in one hand, the poker in the other, to smash open the door, if need was.

However, the door opened readily upon my touching it. The room was empty. Its aspect was entirely the same as when I had left it earlier in the day, except that it seemed more cold, and damp, and draughty than ever. Presently, I found a reason for this: the window looking into the stable-yard was open. Now, I was pretty certain in my own mind that when I had last seen it, it had been closed. I glanced towards the chandelier-hook. I was, I admit, relieved at finding that the chandelier-hook had nothing hanging from it.

I looked out into the stable-yard, but could see nothing, hear nothing, except that at some little distance a dog was baying miserably. I closed the window, but, doing so, I noticed that it was without any fastening. I went down stairs again. I felt uneasy in my mind; I couldn't satisfactorily account to myself for the footsteps I had plainly heard. Yet, as I thought over it, I began to form a theory on the subject; and I convinced myself that I should be no more troubled that night. I barred my door carefully, however; and after waiting an hour or two, and feeling at last a sort of superstitious comfort at hearing an early cock crow, I went to bed, and slept tolerably.

Noddington stirred itself a little concerning me on the following morning. But I had pre-arranged my line of conduct; I was calm, discreet, reserved. Huxham, I found, had been setting afloat a preposterous account of his adventures; but I ignored Huxham. I averred that he had gone home much inebriated at an early hour; and Noddington, notwithstanding its desire to credit the fact that something marvellous had in truth occurred, had yet unquestioning belief in the inebriety of its sexton. The statement that I had slept as sound as a top, it was much less disposed to accept. Mr Mumford was congratulatory. He was glad to find that a sensible tenant had at last been secured for the White Hart. Dr Blossop was kind enough to express his pleasure at the fact that a hard-headed London medical man had come down to Noddington to send to the right-about all the absurd fables that had been rife about the place a great deal too long. Other Noddingtonians were heard to state, that for all my brave talk, I looked mighty pale. The Red Lion, I may mention, was of this opinion; and he did not change his views, probably, when he found me purchasing another bottle of brandy to comfort me during my second night in the White Hart Inn.

The excitement through Noddington during the day brought a little business to the surgery: I dispensed a blue pill and black draught, I strapped up a cut finger, and I applied some liniment to a confused wound on a child's leg. I began to think that, ghost or no ghost, I was beginning to make a practice.

Towards evening, I found Mr Huxham eyeing me very wistfully. 'I don't think I quite finished that last story about the body-snatching,' he said. It was clear his fondness for brandy and water predominated for the moment even over his dread

of ghosts; but I resolutely declined his companionship.

When night came, I locked up the house carefully, and lighted my candles in the surgery, late the bar-parlour; but I did not remain there. Leaving the candles burning, I went up, without a light, to the great room, the window of which was closed. I took up my station in a corner of the room. I had the poker with me, with very vague notions as to what I intended to do with it; but it seemed to me that the possession of some sort of weapon, of offence or defence, was decidedly desirable.

It had struck eleven o'clock. The time passed very slowly. It was rather miserable work waiting in that great, cold, dark room for the advent of the perturbed spirit. I was sorely tempted to steal back to my surgery, and refresh myself with another dose of the Red Lion brandy. I began to wish that I had not taken upon myself to prescribe for the White Hart ghost. After all, strictly speaking, a general practitioner had no right to be regarding a ghost as a patient. It was no part of my duty to be curing Noddington of its haunted house. I was just deciding in my own mind that it was a pity I had ever heard of Noddington, or ever dreamed of settling there with the view of making a practice, when distinctly there was the sound of some one crossing the stable-yard without, then a curious rustling of the ivy; a shadow darkened the window; then came a rush of cold night-air into the room; the window opened slowly, noiselessly; a leg appeared, then another, then a whole body. A man stepped into the room.

He was close to me. Stretching out my arm, I could have hit him with the poker; certainly, I could have touched him. I could hear him breathing. He paused for a moment, as though to recover himself after his exertion of climbing into the room; then he began to walk with a firm, heavy, solemn footfall up and down, up and down the middle of the deserted room; and it seemed to me that he trod with especial weight when he came to that part of the floor which was over my surgery, where, possibly, he presumed me to be sitting.

Was I frightened? Never mind whether I was or not. For some minutes, I was certainly irresolute as to what course I should adopt. One thing I was pretty clear about—it was not a ghost I had to deal with—it was a living man. At last, I made up my mind what to do. As he paced down the room, I followed him stealthily, so that when arriving at the opposite wall, he turned to pace again, he met me face to face in the dark.

He stopped, started, gave a scream, threw up his hands, and staggered back, falling heavily on the floor. I went up to him. The man had fainted. I ran down stairs, to return immediately, with a candle and a tumbler of water. I threw away the poker; I had no further need for that. In a minute, I was untying a stiff white cravat, and sprinkling water in the pale face of—Dr Blossop. Presently, he revived a little.

'The ghost! the ghost!' he moaned feebly, shivering. It was clear—a spurious ghost himself—he had taken me for the genuine article, and the misconception had considerably disturbed his nervous system.

'*Similia similibus curantur*,' I said.

'An infernal homœopathist,' he muttered. Even

at such a moment, professional prejudices strongly possessed him.

'Nothing of the kind. As respectable an allopathist as you are; more respectable, if you come to that. This is very pretty conduct, Dr Blossop.'

'Don't expose me,' he whined piteously; 'don't expose me. There's a dear, good, kind young man. For Heaven's sake—for my poor dear child.'

He was well enough presently to come down into the surgery. He was very humble and contrite; he confessed everything: he had been the ghost of the White Hart; he had climbed his garden-wall, and made his way into the great room by the help of the broken pump and the ivy; he had been in the habit of walking up and down, heavily, after the manner of Jugby the suicide—sometimes he had even brought his dog-chain, and rattled it, by way of being additionally terrible; he had rung the bell from the stable-yard. And his motive? Well, it had arisen years back. It had then been a matter of vast importance to him to prevent any other medical man from settling in Noddington; and he had commenced to haunt the White Hart—the only empty house in the place. His plan had succeeded. He had kept away his rivals; he had ruled supreme for many years—Noddington's only medical man—until I had come, and detected him, compelling him to give up the ghost indeed!

But why, I asked, had he not permitted the auctioneer, the lawyer, the retired linen-draper, to occupy the White Hart peaceably? Why had he haunted them, who could prejudice or interfere with him in no way? Well, he was afraid suspicion would be excited, and would attach to him, if it were found that the ghost only disturbed rival medical men. He therefore had been compelled to treat all tenants alike. And then he admitted that he had felt a sort of pleasant excitement in haunting the White Hart and alarming its inmates. If I only knew how dreadfully dull Noddington was, he declared, I should appreciate the importance of obtaining entertainment in any shape. But he was prepared to confess that his conduct had been very shameful; that he had treated me very ill—the more so, that no real reason existed now for his desire to keep other practitioners out of Noddington. And he intimated that he had feathered his nest very satisfactorily—that he had no need to fear opposition—that he was advancing in life—and soon thought of retiring altogether from practice. He ended by again imploring me not to expose him.

I did not expose him; indeed, I forgave him. I am, I fear, absurdly good-natured; and then he promised to advance my interests, and to make all possible amends. We had a glass of brandy and water together, and became very good friends.

I remained in Noddington; and the talk about the White Hart being haunted began gradually to die away. I had effected a cure. By and by, Dr Blossop made me an offer of a partnership, and I accepted it. Since then, I have been doing very well indeed.

The Noddington people say there's only one thing against me—I am not married, and they hold that a medical man ought to be a married man. I am trying to get rid of this objection. Miss Julia Blossop looks more and more kindly upon me every day. I have had to struggle against her ridiculous predilection for the curate of Noddington, whom I have always held to be a singularly inane young man. But as the rumour

gains ground that the curate and the rector's daughter are to be seen playing suspiciously protracted games of croquet together, I fancy that Julia is disposed to think she might do worse than accept my suit. In regard to which matter, I venture to say there can hardly be two opinions.

#### SHIPS' PAPERS AND CAPTAINS' DUTIES.

LANDSMEN have a very inadequate conception of the labours and duties, responsibilities and anxieties, which press upon the captain of a merchant-ship, especially one that carries both passengers and cargo; such as most of those belonging to the great shipowners, Green, Wigram, Dunbar, Baines, Gibbs, or Lindsay, are wont to do. A ship-of-war has two officers who divide the duties, the captain and the master; the one of whom may be regarded as king over all the human beings in the ship, the other as king over the inanimate ship itself. But in a merchant-ship there is one king and one only. He is technically known to maritime law as the Master; but in popular language he is called the Captain—and a captain he shall be for our present purpose.

In the first place, there are the relations established between the captain and the owners, his employers. He is responsible to them for almost everything after the ship starts on her voyage; and he is invested with large powers, as a necessary consequence. The owners have a right to the whole of his time and services; and if he makes a profit by any transactions in which the ship is concerned, that profit legally goes to them, not to him. On the other hand, he is empowered to do everything which is necessary for the welfare of the ship, the crew, the passengers, or the cargo. He may bind the owners, without their knowing it at the time, to contracts for fitting out, victualling, hiring seamen, hiring pilots, taking freight, while away from the port to which the ship belongs; he may pledge the credit of the owners for money borrowed for carrying on the service of the ship; he may raise money on documents technically called *bottomry* and *respondentia*—a kind of pawning or pledging either of the ship or cargo; he may even sell the ship, under special circumstances. Before starting on a voyage, he ought to know his ship by heart, its build and its soundness, its rigging and its fittings; for he cannot else measure the extent of his liability. He must see that all his ship's papers (of which more anon) are right and ready; that there is nothing contraband, no 'stow-aways' on board; that all dues and tolls are paid, wherever he may be; that neither goods nor stores are stolen by passengers or by crew; and that all the daily incidents of a voyage are duly written down, to enable him to render an account of his stewardship when the voyage is over.

In the second place, there are the relations which the captain bears towards the crew, whether petty officers, common sailors, or apprentices. He has entire authority over them on board; he may imprison or moderately punish them when they do wrong; and if any of them die during the voyage, he is executor for their effects until the proper arrangements can be made on land. The ship's articles, as they are called, are papers signed by him and each of the crew separately, defining the relations between them. They denote the nature and probable duration of the voyage for which the

sailor engages; the number and description of the persons forming the crew (a point on which the labour which falls to the lot of each of them will mainly depend); the day when they must come on board; the capacity in which each man is to serve; the rate of wages he is to receive; the scale of provisions forming the dietary; and any other regulations and stipulations which the owners, captain, and crew may agree upon. Besides such powers as the law gives to the captain over the crew, in regard to serious offences committed by the latter, there are blank forms drawn up by the Board of Trade, which may constitute the basis for a supplementary agreement, if captain and crew wish. It is not deemed necessary by the law; but if both parties sign it, the law sanctions it, and it becomes legally binding. The blank form contains an enumeration of about twenty minor offences—such as dilatoriness, insolence towards captain, quarrelling, swearing, carrying a sheath-knife, drunkenness, neglect, misuse of lights on board, not attending divine service on Sundays, neglect to shave and dress up on Sundays, &c. The parties concerned may select any items from this list they may agree upon (of course, the captain would propose them, not the crew), sign them, and cancel the others.

Then there are the relations existing between the captain and the passengers, which involve many matters of some delicacy—seeing that he is a servant of the owners, that the passengers are customers of the owners, and that he is to carry out a contract entered into between these owners and these customers. In a trading point of view, he is only a shopman serving a shopkeeper. Yet how different is it in practice! For the safety of all on board, his will must be paramount—he is constitutional king. On every hour of every day, there is within him the potentiality of saying to a passenger: 'You shall not;' and the passenger tacitly admits this. A passenger-ship, when it carries less than thirty passengers, or less than one adult passenger to every fifty tons register, does not come under the control of the Emigration Commissioners; but when it exceeds those limits, the captain is responsible to the commissioners as well as to the owners. He must berth his passengers properly; he must separate the married from the single, the men from the women; he must attest all births and deaths on board; and if any marriages take place, he must attest those also; he must see that there is no prohibited cargo, such as gunpowder or lucifers, that might be dangerous; he must see that the dietary scale is respected, and must exercise his own judgment in determining what 'substitutes' shall be used, when any one article of diet is running low. Whatever arrangements are made by the owners about surgeons, stewards, and cooks, he must see that all do their duty, and all must report their proceedings to him when desirable or necessary. The Passengers' Act, as an important statute is called, lays down very stringent rules concerning the boats, life-boats, anchors, fire-engines, and meteorological instruments which must be carried by passenger-ships, on the ground that the safety of human life in such ships is more important than that of merchandise in mere cargo-ships; and the necessity of looking after these matters adds to the captain's anxious duties. If passengers are insubordinate (and there are unavoidably some rough customers among them), the captain has the power of a magistrate over them;

seeing that, where many persons are cooped up for weeks or months together within a floating house, anything like anarchy among them would imperil the comfort, even the safety of all. If the ship is in danger, the passengers are expected to be as obedient as the crew to the orders of the captain. If, on crossing the line, the sailor's favourite pastime of Father Neptune is attempted, and the passengers will not submit to it, the captain decides how far the matter may be carried to avoid collision.\* If a passenger dies on board, and no person is present legally entitled to take possession of his effects, the captain must take charge of them, make an inventory of them, retain or dispose of them at his discretion, and hold himself ready to shew a written record of all that he has done in the matter; and then he must superintend the mournful ceremony of consigning the body to the deep; and must note down in writing such particulars as may be needed by the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in his tables of population.

Again, there are the relations existing between the captain and the freighters, the merchants to whom the cargo belongs. He has nothing to do with making out the original documents concerning the cargo; that is a matter between the person who pays money to have his goods carried, and the person who receives money for carrying them; but he must keep in charge, and ready at hand when wanted, copies of some of these documents. When the ship is preparing for a voyage, his watchful eye and matured judgment must always be ready to determine whether the cargo is properly stowed. He sees that the dunnage—the pieces of wood on which the lower tiers of cargo rest, to keep them free from dirt and bilge-water—is sufficient in quantity, and properly placed; that the ballast is duly proportioned to the cargo (once a freighter recovered damages because his goods had been injured through the use of sand as ballast); that the different kinds of merchandise shall be so stowed as not to injure each other; that those shall be placed uppermost which will have to be first removed from the ship; that there shall be proper arrangements made for ventilating the hold and its contents; that if the ship carries passengers as well as cargo, the latter shall not be allowed to encroach on the space necessary for the former; and that the stowage shall be compatible with the due handling and steering of the ship. It is true there are others responsible for these duties besides himself; but if the cargo fails to be delivered at the proper time and place, and in proper condition, it is not known, without inquiry, on whom the loss will fall; and he has strong motives for insuring that his part of the undertaking, at any rate, shall be duly attended to.

The captain must be tolerably acquainted with the maritime laws of his own and other countries in so far as they refer to duties, tolls, quarantine, &c.; he must know what the Merchant Seaman's Act tells him about his own crew; what the Mercantile Marine Act lays down as to the duties between captain and owners; what the Passengers' Act says about passengers and emigrants. He

\* In one of the New Zealand ships last year, the exasperation of one of the passengers and the crew, at the determination of the former that he would not submit to the ceremony of 'shaving,' and the violent means taken by them to compel him, were such as to impel the captain thereupon to put a stop to the proceedings.

must be conversant with the requirements of the Customs department, the Admiralty, the Board of Trade, the Trinity House, and the Harbour and Dock authorities with which his ship will be concerned. And lastly, when war is pending, he has an addition to his anxious duties—how to keep out of danger if his own country is one of the belligerents; and how to behave towards both belligerents if his country is neutral.

Truly, the captain of a ship does not sleep on a bed of roses; indeed, whether he ever sleeps at all, seems to be a kind of problem; for his eye is supposed to be at all times upon everybody and everything. Like the boots at an inn, the captain is supposed to be always wide awake.

The ship's papers are very essential things for the captain to have in safe custody; they are his guarantees against many troubles and vexations; they are vouchers that all is right; and the absence of any of them shews that something is wrong. Many of them are essentially necessary to a neutral ship, to prevent its seizure by belligerents; while others are needed whether war or peace prevails.

One of these is the *passport* or *sea-letter*, without which the captain of a neutral ship would fare badly if met by either of the belligerents. It is a permission from his own state or government to proceed on the voyage. The name and tonnage of the ship; its technical description or kind among naval craft; the nature of the cargo contained; the port from which the ship sailed; the port to which bound—all are mentioned. Supposing, for instance, the ship were English, bound to Australia during a civil war between two belligerents in America, this document is the British government's mode of saying: 'We believe that this ship has obeyed the law of nations, so far as concerns the object of the voyage; you must neither of you capture or injure it; you must respect the cargo as well as the ship; if you depart from this, it will be an act of war against England, and we shall demand reparation.'

But this only implies that the voyage itself is *bona fide*; there are many other conditions to be attended to. *Proofs of property*, for instance, to shew that the ship really belongs to a neutral state. If either belligerent suspects that she was built in the states of the other belligerent, and if such was really the case, there must be papers to shew that she was purchased by a citizen of the neutral state before the declaration of war, or captured and legally sold to him during the war. In the latter case, an authenticated *bill of sale* must be among the papers, to shew that the property in the ship was legally conveyed to the inhabitant of the neutral state. Those who remember how fierce were the diplomatic contests during the recent war in America as to the country in which a particular ship was built, and the legality of transfer to a neutral, will be prepared to understand that this is a very critical matter to the owner of such a ship at such a time; the Confederates shewed how narrowly they scrutinised any claim for mercy to an English ship which they had the smallest reason for suspecting was built in a Federal port—if they doubted the proof, down she went to the bottom, or up she went in a mass of flame.

Again: if the ship is all right, and the voyage all right, there may be other questions concerning the crew; and there must be papers at hand to answer these questions. One of these is the *muster-roll*, or what the French call the *rôle d'équipage*, containing the names, ages, place of

birth, place of residence, and mode of occupation in the ship, of every person on the ship's books, to denote their nationality. If there are foreigners among them, and especially natives of either belligerent state, the other belligerent claims a right to ascertain this fact clearly; for the law of nations gives belligerents a very troublesome right of interference in this matter; and a neutral captain is far safer if he can keep clear of all doubtful nationalities among the members of his crew.

Then there is the *charter-party*, sometimes necessary whether there is a state of war or not. It is needed where a freighter takes the whole ship, or employs it to convey his own cargo alone to a distant port. The charter-party is the contract between him and the owner of the ship. The stipulations vary, but usually refer to the burden and seaworthiness of the ship, the mode of lading, the time of starting, and the place of destination. The charterer may, if he pleases, have other goods than his own on board; but the responsibility of owner and captain remains the same. It is necessary to the safety of a neutral, in time of war, for the captain to have a copy of this document; for he is bound to have no 'contraband of war,' as it is called, on board; and a belligerent claims the right of ascertaining whether this condition has been fulfilled.

The *bill of lading* is another document which enables the captain to shew that his proceedings are fair and above board. It consists of a receipt by the captain, denoting that the cargo is in his care, and that he undertakes duly to deliver it. If it is a chartered ship, one bill of lading covers the whole cargo; but if an ordinary trading-ship, there is one such document for every freighter or shipper of goods. The captain is bound, as a carrier, to land all the cargo safely at the proper port or ports; but he is exempted from responsibility under the contingencies of the 'act of God' (storms, lightning, &c.), the Queen's enemies, fire, and maritime dangers and accidents. If a belligerent, in searching such a ship, finds goods for which there are no bills of lading, so much the worse for the captain—he will have many embarrassing questions to answer.

Then there are *invoices*, containing particulars and prices of each parcel of goods, and the amount of the freight and other charges to which it is liable: they are intended to shew by whom the goods are sent, and to whom consigned. The charges, added to the net value of the goods, are entry, duty, bond, debenture, cartage, wharfage, freight, primage, insurance, commission, &c. The documents really concern only the buyer and seller, the consigner and consignee, of the goods; but if they are honestly forthcoming on board, they help to determine the *bona fide* nature of the cargo. Such things have been known, however, as fraudulent invoices, to give contraband goods a natural character.

The *log-book* or *ship's journal*, whether in war-times or peace-times, is a document which never for a day must escape the captain's attention. In it he must enter a sort of biography of the good ship, a notice of the exact spot where she was every day: if faithfully kept, this is a great help towards proving neutrality. But besides this, it keeps a record of the daily life on board—offences and punishment of crew; death and cause of death; birth, sex of infant, and name of parents, of any child born on board (usually in a passenger-ship);

termination of any seaman or apprentice's time of service; sale of effects of deceased seamen; collisions with other ships; and any other particulars which the Board of Trade may from time to time require. The official log of a ship's voyage is a permanent document, valuable in many ways long after the ending of the voyage.

The *bill of health* is a paper not to be forgotten, especially on board ships coming from the Levant or from Barbary. It is a certificate usually signed by a consul at the port of departure, concerning any contagious disease at that place when the ship started, and any of the crew being affected at the time of departure. A *clean bill*, a *suspected bill*, and a *foul bill* are three varieties; they speak for themselves.

A *certificate of register* of a ship may or may not be needed on board, but it is an important paper to the owner. Every ship is supposed to belong to some particular port, and is registered or enrolled at that port by the Customs authorities, to give a national and distinctive character to shipping. She has a definite name, not to be changed in the register; and is registered to a definite owner or owners.

#### BULL VERSUS BEAR.

On one occasion during my residence in California, in 1853, I had occasion to proceed upon business from Stockton to the mission of San José, a distance of between eighty and ninety miles. I was in the saddle betimes, as my business was of importance, and had made three or four miles before the first faint streaks of the coming day became visible in the east. The air was cool and balmy, and laden with the perfume of the flowers and herbage; whilst, as the sun arose, the dew-drops glittered everywhere upon the twigs and grass blades like diamonds. The deer, as they left their coverts to feed, gazed fearlessly on either side of the trail as I passed; and every now and then I disturbed a bevy of quail, who, after a short flight, dropped in the edge of the chapparel, or into the wild oats. The country was rolling and park-like, dotted here and there with live oaks of immense size, standing singly, or with smaller trees in clumps.

After an hour or two's ride, Mount Diablo became visible in the distance, looming up cloud-like in the thin air; whilst, upon my left, the coast-range ran along almost parallel to my route. Gradually, the breeze ceased, and the air became close and oppressive, and continued so until I stopped for my mid-day halt, to allow my horse to feed. Unusually sultry as the day had been, it became still more so, and so silent, that not even the buzzing of an insect could be heard, and the air felt as though it had been heated in a furnace. Stretched on my blankets, I had tried to smoke my pipe, but even that lacked its usual soothing effect. Presently, a low muttering sound was audible, which gradually increased; it was the moaning of the storm-wind, which came sweeping gustily along. Then came a flash of the most vivid lightning I ever saw, instantly followed by a tremendous peal of thunder, the signal-gun of the

advancing storm, which rent the air, and made the earth tremble. A deep silence, for a brief interval, followed, which seemed more terrible than the previous uproar; then came the lurid flashes and crashing thunder, not in low, grumbling tones, but in deafening peals; whilst the wind roared, and the rain descended in sheets of driving water. For two mortal hours did the tempest rage, and the wild winds swept by, whilst I cowered under my blankets, with bent head, and back to the blast.

At first, the thirsty and parched prairie drank greedily up the flood of water poured upon it, but soon it became completely saturated, and could contain no more, and the overflowing waters collected in great pools.

My horse, who had at first been terrified by the thunder-peals and lightning flashes, had strained upon his picket-peg, as he plunged, snorting with terror, but had failed to either break the tough raw-hide lariat, or draw the peg; and satisfied that he could not get loose, I had devoted my attention solely to sheltering myself as much as possible from the downpour.

Upon looking around when the storm had somewhat abated, what was my consternation to find that my horse, as soon as the ground had become thoroughly saturated, had pulled out the peg, and had left me on foot in the prairie. It was no use to think of pursuing my journey thus, and I sorrowfully prepared to retrace the long miles over which I had ridden in the morning. Rolling up my saddle, bridle, and tin cup, in which I had made my coffee, in my saturated blankets, and hiding them as well as I could in some stunted shrubs, I followed in the direction my horse had started, hoping to be able to trail him by his hoof-marks in the softened ground, and by the drag of his long lariat and picket-peg, which I hoped might entangle themselves around some bush or sapling, and thus bring up my runaway to a stand-still.

It was not, however, without great difficulty that I could discern the trail, for the driving rain had washed it out, save here and there occasionally; but still by keeping *the line*, I managed now and then to come upon traces of the fugitive. More intent upon the trail than on surrounding objects, I had proceeded four or five miles when I discovered that I had become an object of curiosity to a large herd of cattle, who were closing in upon me with no very friendly intention.

I had lived in Texas long enough to know how hostile prairie-cattle always are to footmen, though a horseman might ride close to them unregarded; I also knew how helpless I was when opposed to such a tremendous aggregation of brute-force as the three or four hundred wild cattle possessed who were now rushing bellowing towards me. The herd of cows, and steers, and yearlings was led by a fierce old bull, who occasionally stopped to tear up the earth and shake his horns; then again he would advance, the mass crowding together, switching their tails high in the air, uttering fearful bellowings, whilst they tossed their horns, staring wildly in mingled rage and wonder.

There was no time to hesitate; I had only just perceived my enemies in time. A herd of wild cattle rushing furiously at a man upon an open

plain soon assist him in coming to a decision. Four or five hundred yards behind me was a tree which I had lately passed, and just behind that again some bushes along the margin of a little creek. I determined to make for the tree, and climb that if possible; if not, if I was too closely pressed by the thundering herd, I would try and gain the bushes, amongst which, or in some hole or cranny in the creek's banks, I might hope to conceal myself. Most pedestrian matches are timed, my race was not, but I have reason to believe that the same distance was never covered quicker by any mortal man. As I gained the tree, I looked back, and saw the foremost of the herd about a hundred yards from me. I never was considered an extraordinary climber when a boy at school, nor perhaps are a pair of heavy Mexican spurs an advantage in climbing, but I went up that tree like a squirrel, and had just gained a safe position, when my pursuers rushed underneath. Although I had gained safety for the moment, still there was something very fearful in my position, for I could form no idea how long the fierce beasts, who were tearing up the earth, and glaring at me with their wild fierce eyes, would keep me 'treed.'

A most unlooked-for adventure relieved me. For some time, most of the herd remained gazing at me; but at length, as though feeling satisfied that I could not escape, they became less stationary, and moved about snatching pettishly at the grass, less from a desire of grazing, than from restlessness at their disappointment in failing to catch me before I could 'tree.'

Whilst thus sauntering aimlessly about, my especial enemy, the bull, strayed into the bushes that fringed the ravine, and suddenly there arose a fearful uproar, and it was evident that the tawny lord of the herd had got into trouble.

A hoarse bellowing and confused growling, intermixed with a crashing of the bushes, whilst the taller saplings swayed to and fro, shewed that some desperate struggle was taking place on the edge of the ravine in which the bull was engaged, but what with I could not discover. Presently, the bull emerged with bloody head and huge furrows ploughed upon his shoulders, from which hung long strips of bloody skin-like ribbons. His eyes were red with rage, and it was evident he had no idea of giving up the contest, but had only retreated to gain an open space where he could fight to better advantage. Hitherto, I had only noticed the bull as a ferocious beast, who had from pure ill-nature put me in serious danger; but now, as he stood glowing with rage, I could not help noticing his admirable proportions. Long, lithe, and wiry, he stood a perfect model of strength and activity, whilst his massive shoulders proved what force he could bring to aid the thrusts of his straight, long, sharp-pointed horns. I had not more than a second or two to take in these points, when his antagonist appeared upon the scene in the shape of a huge grizzly bear. No sooner was the bear fairly in the open, than the bull lowered his head, and charged straight and true at him, with the seeming force of a steam-engine. The bear rose up upon his hind-legs to receive the attack, and catching the bull by the horns, bore down his head upon the ground by his great strength and weight, clinging to the head with his fore-legs, while he worked his hind ones, clawing with his cruel talons the sides and shoulders of the bull. The match was an equal one, as far as weight

was concerned, and nearly balanced in other respects; for whilst the bear worked 'tooth and toenails,' the sharp horns and greater activity of the bull served to equalise them as to weapons; and as both antagonists possessed equal courage and determination, it was clear the duel was to be *à la mort*, and the victory, I could see, between such well-matched foes depended upon accident. Locked together thus in deadly strife, they remained some minutes, the bull each moment striving, as it were, to contract himself for his repeated thrusts, and the bear endeavouring to hold the bull's head to prevent their force, never intermitting for an instant raking with his claws the ribs and shoulders of the foe. For a moment or two they seemed to pause for breath by mutual consent, a lull which the bull artfully took advantage of, by a sudden backward spring, to get clear of the bear.

During the whole of the combat, the other cattle had stood around in awe-struck wonder, not attempting in any way to aid their champion. The bull, covered with gore from the gashes cut by the claws, and the head gnawed by the teeth of the bear, was a horrible sight to see, though the bear appeared as yet but little injured. As soon as the bull had gained space sufficient to give impetus to his charge, he again rushed furiously at the Grizzly, and this time succeeded in plunging one horn into the bear's belly, and, jerking his head up, brought away upon his horns some of the entrails of his foe; but the next moment he was borne back by the Grizzly, and both rolled over in another deadly struggle; and now so furious and rapidly did they fight, whirling over and over, that only an undistinguishable mass could be seen. Again the bull fought clear of his antagonist, but he presented a far more deplorable appearance than before, for one eye had been torn from the socket, and his ears hung in shreds, whilst all the forward part of his hips was a mass of blood and mud, and his tongue, which protruded beyond his swollen lips, had been bitten through, and hung by only a piece of skin.

But the bear had evidently had the worst of this second encounter, for he lay almost motionless, his entrails wound round and round him like gory belts; and whilst in this state, the bull gored him repeatedly, till finally a long shiver passed through the bear, and he lay dead. Convinced at last that his enemy was dead, the bull raised his head in triumph, and as well as his mutilated tongue permitted, gave a roar of victory. It was dearly purchased, however, for he tottered as he bellowed, and though he set his legs wide apart, he swayed from side to side; presently his head drooped lower and lower, till at last he sunk down groaning to the ground. Then came two or three vain efforts to recover his legs, and after a few convulsive shudders, he too lay dead beside his foe. The herd sniffed round the dead bodies for a few moments, and then, wild with terror, started panic-stricken across the prairie.

Finding the coast clear, I descended from my perch, and with a due appreciation of the dangers of foot-travelling, set off in search of my horse, expecting a grizzly bear to make his appearance from every clump of bushes that I passed. After a tramp of several miles, I was fortunate enough to find my horse, whose lariat had become entangled around some shrubs near which he had stopped to feed; and mounting him bare-backed, I turned his head towards where I had left my saddle and other

*impedimenta*; nor was I sorry, soon after sunrise the following morning, to see the long avenue of stately live oaks which line the road as you approach the mission of San José.

### LES BOURRAS PAILLE SON.

At Marseille, on the 4th of September in this present year 1865, there died by the hand of the executioner a man, whose crime of murder with very *unextenuating* circumstances, had excited a strong feeling of indignation against him. Immense crowds, of whom the majority were women, assembled to see him pay the last penalty of the law. The weakness of the prisoner was so great that he had to be carried in the arms of the executioner to the cart which conveyed him to the place where the guillotine was erected; and arriving at the Place Sebastopol, he was assisted by two men to ascend the steps that lead to the platform. To add to the horror of the scene, the mother of his victim was among the crowd; and when she saw him on the platform of the guillotine, uttered the most piercing cries, calling for vengeance upon the murderer of her child. To a foreigner, happening to witness the execution, there was another circumstance which, if not so horrible as the cries of the mother for blood, must have been equally strange and interesting. When the knife had done its work, and the executioner and his assistants had disappeared, four men, grave, silent, unknown, their faces covered with an impenetrable veil, made their appearance, and took possession of the dead body. The crowd manifested no surprise on seeing them; it was evident, that though none knew their names, every one knew their office, and on every hand might be heard in a low tone: '*Voilà les Bourras Paille Son.*' Any one who saw them for the first time on the platform in the Place Sebastopol, in the early light of that September morning, and who knew nothing of their office and work, will probably never forget the impression produced on his mind. They were covered from their shoulders to their feet with a long robe of coarse cloth, such as is used for packing; around their waists was a thick rope, which served as a belt or girdle; the whole of their head and face was covered with an immense cowl or hood, in which two small holes were made to enable them to see their way. Such were the *Bourras Paille Son*; and the question might well rise to the stranger's lips: What are they, and what do they do?

The system of public penitence which the Church of Rome instituted at an early period of her history, was the occasion of many strange developments, and in one of these this order took its rise.

Abbé Fleury, in his *Histoire de l'Eglise*, says that in the year 1259 there grew up a new kind of doctrine, or, as he calls it elsewhere, penitence; that, beginning at Perouse, it spread to Rome, and thence through the whole of Italy. The nobles and the common people, old and young, even to children of five years of age, were so in awe of the wrath of God, in consequence of the great crimes that were committed throughout the country, that they went in penitence through the streets of the city naked from their waists upwards. They marched two and two in procession, each having in his hand a whip made of leather, with which they struck themselves till their bodies were covered with blood, at the same time uttering the most doleful

lamentations, imploring the mercy of God, and the help of the Virgin. They did this even in the night, through a very cold winter. Thousands, and, in some places, ten thousand at once, thus walked in procession, attended by priests carrying the cross and its banners, visiting the churches, and prostrating themselves before the altars. The same scenes were acted in small towns and villages, so that the mountains and the plains resounded with the cries of the penitents. From Italy this penitence spread to Germany and Poland, the devotees adopting the practice of covering their heads and faces, so as not to be known. This new kind of devotion, however, soon became obnoxious to the rulers both of the church and the state; to the former, because there was an evident tendency to form a sect—indeed, a sect was in some measure formed, the members of which attributed to themselves priestly functions; to the latter, from a fear lest such crowds of people might be made use of for political purposes. All such practices were therefore forbidden under the severest penalties, and Fleury says, in his own naive way: 'This sect was thus soon despised and abandoned, as it was formed without authority and without reason.'

From the ruins of this sect there sprung up a number of brotherhoods, each of which gave itself to some special work. One undertook the care of the sick, another the burying of the dead, another the performance of certain special devotions in the public cemeteries. Each society was known and named from the colour of the robe worn by its members; and so there were black penitents, white penitents, gray penitents; in fact, almost every colour known to the dyer. 'Each,' to quote a writer in the *Petit Journal*, 'aimed at the accomplishment of an act of charity, the observance of an act of penitence, the doing regularly a religious work.' Some of these are still found in the south of France, and among them *Les Bourras Paille Son*. The work to which they devote themselves is the burial of the poor; but among them there is a select band, who have vowed not only to bury the poor, but also to perform this last act of charity for those who have perished by the hand of the executioner. These are distinguished from their brethren by wearing a tan-coloured robe; this peculiar colour may have been chosen for the same reason that the guillotine is painted red—that is, that spots of blood may the less easily be seen. On the eve of an execution, what is called a chapel is held, at which all the members of the fraternity assist who have taken upon themselves the vow of interring the condemned. Lots are drawn in order to ascertain which of their number are to do duty on the following day. The four thus selected, clad in their hoods and robes, make their way through the crowd to the foot of the scaffold. The executioner and his assistants, when they have done their work, retire from the platform, leaving the body of the victim still attached to the plank, and his head in the receptacle into which it falls. Standing at the foot of the ladder, the priest of the community then addresses the four brethren thus: 'There is no longer a criminal here, but the mortal remains of a man whom God created in his own image, and we are come to bury him.' The brethren respond 'Amen.' They then ascend the ladder, detach the body from the plank, and, having made a thick bed of straw and bran in the middle of a large coarse cloth, place the dead body upon it. They

then take the head, and join it to the trunk, and sew up the winding-sheet with strong thread. This being done, the body is placed on a bier, and, attended by the priest who has given absolution to the criminal, they carry it to the cemetery.

Their name, *Bourras Paille Son*, is derived partly from the material of which their robe is made, and partly from the straw and bran they use so largely in the performance of their self-imposed duty. *Bure*, the French word for coarse packing-cloth, is pronounced in the *patois* of the South *bourra*; *paille* is French for straw, and *son* for bran. Every grade and profession of society is represented in this strange brotherhood, and, like poverty, the vow to enter it brings a man into singular associations. General Camas, peer of France, and for some time general-in-chief of the eighth division, was one of the *Bourras Paille Son*. His colleague in the stall of the chapel belonging to the order was Father Jerome, a crossing-sweeper, and one day the latter was heard to say to the general: 'There is nothing equal in the world; no man is just like his brother; one blade of grass differs from its fellow; but true equality, real brotherhood, is found at the foot of the cross in our little chapel, *Les Bourras Paille Son*.' Men enter the order from different motives: one because he has been crossed in love; another because he has lost those dear to him by bereavement; with another, conscience has been busy, and under the influence of remorse or contrition, he vows to enter the brotherhood *Les Bourras Paille Son*. But the vow once made is, as a rule, observed. The writer of the article in the *Petit Journal*, from whom I have before quoted, relates the following anecdote in illustration of this. M. Lombardon, who had filled the office of President of the Tribunal of Commerce, took the vow. Some time after, he met a friend, who remarked that he was extremely agitated, and asked what was the matter. 'The lot has fallen on me, and I have to attend the execution to-morrow.' His friend suggested that he might easily find a substitute. 'No,' said he; 'I have made a vow, and I must accomplish it to the end.' In a few days he again met his friend, and in answer to his inquiries said: 'O my friend, nothing gives a man strength like the performance of duty.'

#### IN THE CHURCHYARD.

O ye dead! O ye dead! you are lying at your rest;  
I am lying thus above you, and I know not which is best;  
Just between us are the grasses, and the gravel, and the clay,  
But they measure not the distance into which you pass away.

Reaching downward grow the rootlets of the flowers and the heath,  
But they cannot touch the bodies that are lying underneath—  
For the eye and ear have wasted, and the busy heart decayed—  
Dust to dust, you're all resolving, as from dust you all were made.

I look upon the sunshine and the sea-waves as they roll,  
And the clouds in high mid-heaven—Are such sights before your soul?  
I hear the breeze and streamlet, and the curlew, and the sheep  
Bleating far upon the mountain—Do they wake you out of sleep!

Do you know the change of seasons, as of old they come and go—

Now the flowers, now the fruitage, now the fading, now the snow!

Do you feel a sudden trembling, when the loved ones tread above,  
And the echo of their footsteps is the echo of their love?

Do you find a thrill of sorrow, as the husband or the wife  
Dry their tears for the departed, and begin to search their life—

Till another takes his station in the fields you used to tread,  
And another takes your pillow, and upon it lays her head!

Do such earthly matters move you? You are past from hence away,

Into larger joys and sorrows than belong to this our day;  
And you look down on the whirling of this life with calmer eyes,

That have learnt to bear the measure of Eternity's surprise.

Are you near us? Can you see us? Can you watch us in our ways?

Do you witness all the evil, all the good of all our days?

Do you, knowing all things better, wonder at us in our strife,

As we clutch the tinsel gilding, and pass by the Crown of Life?

O ye dead! O ye dead! young and old, and small and great,

Now you know your doom of sorrow, or your high and blest estate,

And I wonder as I ponder, what you feel and what you see;

As according to the sowing, so your reaping now must be.

O ye dead! O ye dead! small and great, and young and old,

I am longing for your secret, and my longing makes me bold—

But since the day they brought you from your houses on the hill,

You have kept your secret steadfast, and I know will keep it still.

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